

Younger Women in America

There are more than 16 million girls ages 10 to 17 in the United States. According to the December 2006 issue of Pediatrics, the average high school girl's computer usage climbed from 8.8 hours a week in 1999 to 11.1 in 2004. Girls, especially those ages 12 to 14, are among the fastest growing groups on the Internet, with 84% now online. Since 1999, the number of teen girls online has more than doubled, to 4.4 million. More American women are online than American men, a first in U.S. history. Eighty-seven percent of all U.S. teens aged 12 to 17 use the Internet, up from 73% in 2000. There are now approximately 11 million teens who go online daily, compared to 7 million in 2000. Girls are generally just as likely as boys to use computers at home and at school, although some of the activities for which they use computers differ.

Girls and Technology

Three of the top ten projected fastest growing occupations between 2004 and 2014 are information technology occupations, which require advanced computer skills and a bachelor's degree. However, girls enroll more in clerical and data entry computer courses than in advanced computer classes. In 2004, girls made up only 15% of the high school students who took the Advanced Placement exam in computer science, down from 17% in 1997. Likewise, parents purchase technology twice as much for their sons as their daughters. While at school only a quarter of the students using computers during free time were girls. Twenty-one percent of the 12 to 17-year old girls do their homework right when they get home from school. Seventeen percent of 12 to 17-year old boys do the same thing.

Girls and Health

According to the National Institute of Health, less than one in ten girls 9 to 13 consume the Dietary Reference's recommended intake of 1,300 milligrams of calcium per day. Three thousand five-hundred eighty-one teens underwent breast augmentation surgery in 2005, compared to 1992 when 978 girls had the procedure done. According to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, 47,396 teens had rhinoplasty (nose reshaping) in 2005, up from 2000, when 18,958 had the procedure. According to the Center for Disease Control, thirty-eight percent of high school girls consider themselves overweight, compared to 25% of high school boys. Ninety percent of all cases of eating disorders are found among girls and young women. Adolescent girls are slightly less likely than boys to drink or use illicit drugs. Girls are now equally likely or more likely than boys to smoke, depending on age. In 2002, there were 75 pregnancies for every 1,000 teen aged girl aged 15 to 19.

Girls and Sports

Participation in vigorous physical activity declines beginning in early adolescence: 64% of ninth-grade girls are vigorously active, compared to only 45% of twelfth-grade girls. At all grade levels, girls are significantly less active than boys. Title IX is federal legislation passed in 1972 designed to prohibit gender discrimination in educational settings. Prior to the passage of Title IX in 1972, nearly 300,000 young women participated in interscholastic athletics nationwide. In 2001, 2.78 million girls participated in sports.

*Sources: Pew Internet & American Life Project
National Institute of Health
American Society of Plastic Surgeons
Center for Disease Control*

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